

Diversity@Work

June 2021

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

WWW.VA.GOV/ORMDI

A Few Upcoming Events

June 2021

VA Pride Month 2021

National Caribbean American Heritage Month

[PTSD Awareness Month](#)

D-Day

June 6

Flag Day

June 14

Juneteenth

June 19



Commemorate
VA Pride Month 2021

ORMDI

Steps Toward Conflict Resolution

You can contact the Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) toll-free at 1-888-566-3982 (TTY/TDD at 1-888-626-9008) and speak with a specialist regarding [EEO Complaint Processing](#), [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#), and [Harassment Prevention](#). You must initiate contact with an EEO counselor within 45 days of the date of the alleged act of discrimination by calling 1-888-566-3982 or visiting your local ORMDI Field Office.

VA joins the Nation in observing Pride Month in June. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) community is an integral and growing segment of our workforce diversity. VA is committed to ensuring this workforce diversity and to cultivating workplace inclusion in accordance with the annual [Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion, No FEAR and Whistleblower Rights and Protection Policy Statement](#) and associated [VA Directives](#).

VA demonstrates this commitment through establishing and enforcing policy guidance protecting employees from discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and with training on LGBT+ cultural competency, consultation and survey-based needs assessment in this area. The Department is proactive in its endeavor to recognize and employ best practices that further exemplify the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. These leading practices were further strengthened by President Biden's [Executive Order](#) on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation.

In response to this Executive Order, VA Secretary Denis McDonough distributed a message to all employees outlining the Department's plan and execution strategy regarding the promotion of gender diversity and sexual orientation inclusivity. This message reiterates VA's shared commitment that **every person at VA**, whether a customer or an employee, will be treated with dignity and respect. This same commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion extends to all VA employees who are representative of many diverse backgrounds, races, national origins and ethnicities.

Through the collective efforts of our combined Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs), the Veterans Health Administration's Veteran Care Coordinators and several LGBT+ community of practice staff members nationwide, VA will host its first virtual Pride Month which will feature a variety of virtual activities throughout the month of June. This year's planned Pride Month event, which is unprecedented, is poised to be a collaborative undertaking that will enlighten, educate and hopefully alleviate any misconceptions about the LGBT+ community and the allies who support them.

For information on VA's LGBT+ Special Emphasis Program or the upcoming virtual VA Pride Month event, contact Sterling Akins, VA's Departmental LGBT+ SEPM, ORMDI. SEPMs should seek local management approval and consult the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs and/or the District Counsel Office as deemed necessary by local management to ensure that use of VA resources in support of a SEP activity is authorized. Visit [VA's LGBT+ Program Web page](#) for more information.



VA UNITED FOR EQUALITY

PRIDE MONTH 2021

June Calendar of events

VA National Virtual PRIDE

Bringing together the LGBT+ Community on a national platform for the first time in VA history. Descriptions and times are found below the calendar of events. Events will be held via Teams. Contact Sterling Akins, ORMDI, for more information.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		¹ LGBTQ Affirming Therapy with Dr. Heather Sperry & Dr. Lauren Cunningham	² Affirmative Care for LGBT+ w/ Q&A at end with Dr. Tiffany Lange	³ Between Sexuality and Spirituality: Why No One Should Ever Have to Choose with Chaplain Lea Brown	⁴ LGBT+ Legal Q&A w/ Ms. Deborah McCallum, OGC Employee Education for LGBT+ Vets: Panel Discussion and Training with Diana Cass	⁵
⁶	⁷ PFLAG=Parents Family and Friends of the LGBT+ with Ann Miller	⁸ Raising a Transgender Child and Family Dealing with the Transition by Debi Jackson	⁹ Affirmative Care for LGBT+ with Spirituality with Dr. Tiffany Lange LGBT+ Legal Q&A w/ Ms. Deborah McCallum, OGC	¹⁰ Personal Story of Stonewall with Mark Segal	¹¹ Former VA Employee Story with a recording from Richard Forbes	¹²
¹³	¹⁴ Affirmative Care for Transgender Veterans	¹⁵ Workforce Development Course: Unconscious Bias with Laura Baker	¹⁶ Soldier of Change: From the Closet to the Forefront of the Gay Rights Movement with Steve Snyder-Hill	¹⁷ Intimate Partner Violence in the LGBTQ Community with Amy Bourne	¹⁸ LGBT+ Legal Q&A w/ Ms. Deborah McCallum, OGC	¹⁹

20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Legal History of LGBTQ Military and Veteran Service with Dr. Timothy Bussey	Do Ask. Do Tell.: A Panel Examining LGBTQ Military and Veteran Service	Identify Organizations In and out the VA and network for LGBT with a focus on Transgender Care with Zander Keig	Transgender Employee Transition Guidance - Presented by Sterling Akins and Andrew Hunter <hr/> Statement by Assistant Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine LIVE <hr/> LGBT+ Legal Q&A w/ Ms. Deborah McCallum, OGC	Providers Education and Training for LGBT+ Care by Dr. Traci Stewart	
27	28	29	30			
	Pisces Healthcare Prosthetic Options and How to Order	LGBT+ Legal Q&A w/ Ms. Deborah McCallum, OGC <hr/> Suicide Prevention for LGBT+ Veterans with Morgan Bresko MPH, LCSW	Active Duty Transgender Service Member and Advocate: Alivia Stehlik <hr/> Gender Awareness and Pronoun Usage with Jack and Tisha			

June 1-4

1st – (1:30-3:00 EST) LGBTQ Affirming Therapy with Dr. Heather Sperry & Dr. Lauren Cunningham This presentation will define LGBT+ specific terms and briefly discuss prevalence rates of LGBT+ people and relevant health disparities. The presentation will then focus on the role of a mental health provider in providing affirming therapy and advocacy to LGBT+ people. This talk is based out of Veteran Health Indiana within Indianapolis, IN.

2nd – (1:00-2:30 EST) Affirmative Care for LGBT+ w/Q&A with Dr. Tiffany Lange This introductory training will focus on the continuums of identity (sexual orientation, gender identity, biological sex, gender expression), the impact of discrimination, relevant healthcare disparities, and ways to encourage a welcoming environment for all (employees and Veterans). Time will be available for Questions.

3rd – (12:00-1:00 EST) Between Sexuality and Spirituality: Why No One Should Ever Have to Choose with Chaplain Lea Brown Through theological reflection and personal story, this presentation will focus on stereotypes, lived experiences and realities of many LGBT+ people with religion and spirituality, and why VA chaplains and staff need to know how best to support LGBT+ Veterans when it comes to their spiritual journeys. Length 20 – 40 minutes.

4th - (1:00-2:00 EST) LGBT+ Legal Q&A Ms. McCallum will discuss the rights of LGBT+ employees and veterans including the anti-discrimination protections under Title VII. She will also answer questions that participants might have concerning specific LGBT+ issues that may arise in the workplace.

(2:30-4:30 EST) Employee Education for LGBT+ Vets: Panel Discussion and Training with Diana

Cass Improving LGBT+ Veteran Healthcare Experience will teach you about our LGBT+ Veteran patients, what terminology to use, how to create a safe space, and what policies and resources are available to you. We will follow that with a Q & A session with three current LGBT+ Veterans who will talk about their experience as patients at the VA.

June 7-11

7th – (12:00-1:00 EST) PFLAG=Parents Family and Friends of the LGBT+ with Ann Miller Ann Miller is the regional director for the gulf region of PFLAG. PFLAG is the oldest and largest national organization dedicated to supporting LGBT+ individuals and their families. Advocating for the rights of LGBT+ individuals, especially youth, drives her passionate work for PFLAG.

8th – (12:30-2:00 EST) Raising a Transgender Child and Family Dealing with the Transition by Debi Jackson Raising a transgender child and family dealing with the transition. She also talks about the negative information the child faces from outside a supportive home.

9th - (1:30-3:00 EST) Affirmative Care for LGBT+ with Spirituality with Dr. Tiffany Lange To raise awareness of healthcare and spiritual considerations for the LGBT+ Veteran community, an introduction training will be offered for Mental Health and Chaplaincy staff. Previous attendance at a training focused on LGBT+ needs is recommended, but not required.

(3:00-4:00 EST) LGBT+ Legal Q&A Ms. McCallum will discuss the rights of LGBT+ employees and veterans including the anti-discrimination protections under Title VII. She will also answer questions that participants might have concerning specific LGBT+ issues that may arise in the workplace.

10th – (2:30 - 4:00 EST) Personal Story of Stonewall with Mark Segal Come listen to the personal story of Mark Segal and his battles for the LGBT+ community, from Stonewall to disrupting TV shows and eventually being on their Joint Diversity Council to his items being added to the collection at the Smithsonian.

11th – (12:30-1:00 EST) Former VA Employee Story with a recording from Richard Forbes Retired West Palm Beach VA employee and longtime entertainer, Richard Forbes, brings us his story as part of the community and his experiences in NYC during the 70s.

June 14-18

14th – (1:30 -3:00 EST) Affirmative Care for Transgender Veterans

This introductory training is geared towards mental health professionals and focused on building cultural competencies for working with Transgender and Gender Diverse Veterans.

15th – (11:00 -12:00 EST) Workforce Development Course: Unconscious Bias with Laura Baker

What is Unconscious Bias? How Does it Affect Me? What Can I Do About It? By the time you are done with this session you will be able to answer these questions and understand how Unconscious Biases can affect the workplace and your life.

16th – (11:30 -12:30 EST) Soldier of Change: From the Closet to the Forefront of the Gay Rights Movement with Steve Snyder-Hill When "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the official U.S. policy on gays serving in the military, was repealed in September 2011, soldier Stephen Snyder-Hill (then Captain Hill) was serving in Iraq. Having endured years of this policy, which passively encouraged a culture of fear and secrecy for gay soldiers, Snyder-Hill submitted a video to a Republican primary debate held two days after the repeal. In the video he asked for the Republicans' thoughts regarding the repeal and their plans, if any to extend spousal benefits to legally married gay and lesbian soldiers.

His video was booed by the audience on national television.

Stephen wrote the book: Soldier of Change: From the Closet to the Forefront of the Gay Rights Movement. Snyder-Hill has traveled the country with his husband, giving interviews on major news networks and speaking at universities, community centers, and pride parades, a champion of LGBT+ equality.

Stephen Snyder-Hill joined the military in 1988 and was deployed in 1990 for Operation Desert Storm. He went into the US Army reserves and was redeployed twenty years later in 2010 for Operation New Dawn. Throughout his military career Snyder-Hill received numerous awards and decorations, including the Meritorious Service Medal. He earned a master's degree in Dietetics and minored in Exercise Physiology at The Ohio State University. He is retired from the US Army as a Major in November of 2019 and works as a Dietitian for Columbus Public Health in Columbus, Ohio.

17th – (11:00 -12:00 EST) Intimate Partner Violence in the LGBTQ Community with Amy Bourne

What is Intimate Partner Violence? How does it affect our LGBT+ Veterans? How can we make them feel safe disclosing this issue while receiving care at the VA? Amy Bourne answers these questions and delves into the data that makes up a section of violence within this community.

18th – (2:00-3:00 EST) LGBT+ Legal Q&A Synopsis: Ms. McCallum will discuss the rights of LGBT+ employees and veterans including the anti-discrimination protections under Title VII. She will also answer questions that participants might have concerning specific LGBT+ issues that may arise in the workplace.

June 21-25

21st – (12:30-2:00 EST) Legal History of LGBTQ Military and Veteran Service with Dr. Timothy Bussey Will discuss legal history of LGBT+ military service.

22nd – (12:30-2:00 EST) Do Ask. Do Tell.: A Panel Examining LGBTQ Military and Veteran Service This panel will bring together past and present military servicemember to talk about LGBT+ military service during and after "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." It will examine how discriminatory policies continue to impact the lives of veterans. Finally, it will highlight key tools for ensuring dignity and respect for all who serve.

23rd – (12:00-1:00 EST) Identify Organizations In and out the VA and network for LGBT with a focus on Transgender Care with Zander Keig Review VHA Directives pertaining to LGBT+ Veterans. Summarize the work of the NMW TGCT. Recommend LGBT+ Veteran and military community resources.

24th – (11:00 -12:30 EST) Transgender Employee Transition Guidance - Presented by Sterling Akins and Andrew Hunter Overview of VA Handbook 5975.4, Transgender Employee Transition Guidance. This Handbook provides guidance on the Department of Veterans Affairs policy and procedures on facilitating a smooth and supportive process for transgender and gender non-conforming employees undergoing gender transition in compliance with all applicable workplace laws, regulations, and directives. The presenters will guide participants through each section of the Handbook and outline the key components of a successful transition plan. At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to: Identify the purpose, background, and scope of VA Handbook 5975.4; communicate a basic understanding of the terms and definitions identified in VA Handbook 5975.4; communicate a basic understanding of VA policies regarding Diversity & Inclusion and Equal Employment Opportunity as it pertains to gender identity; identify roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in a VA employee's transition in the workplace; identify and communicate key transition plan elements; and provide resources and guidance to VA employees and supervisors regarding transgender and gender non-conforming employees undergoing gender transition in the workplace.

(12:30 -1:00 EST) Statement by Assistant Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine Dr. Levine has prepared a statement for this event. She is the first Transgender member of a Presidential cabinet, a start in helping our community overcome boundaries. This will be a **LIVE** event.

(1:00-2:00 EST) LGBT+ Legal Q&A Synopsis: Ms. McCallum will discuss the rights of LGBT+ employees and veterans including the anti-discrimination protections under Title VII. She will also answer questions that participants might have concerning specific LGBT+ issues that may arise in the workplace.

25th – (1:30-2:30 EST) Providers Education and Training for LGBT+ Care by Dr. Traci Stewart Improving the LGBT+ Veteran Healthcare Experience through Communication, taught by Dr. Traci Stewart, will help providers and staff by explaining the importance of basic communication principles to LGBT+ health. Dr. Stewart will review common health concerns of LGBT+ patients including gay and bisexual men, lesbian and bisexual women, and transgender men and women.

June 28-30

28th – (2:00-3:30 EST) Pisces Healthcare Prosthetic Options and How to Order The covered topics will include gender affirming prosthetics, vendor options, prosthetic sample kits, and eligibility criteria.

29th – (1:00-2:00 EST) LGBT+ Legal Q&A Synopsis: Ms. McCallum will discuss the rights of LGBT+ employees and veterans including the anti-discrimination protections under Title VII. She will also answer questions that participants might have concerning specific LGBT+ issues that may arise in the workplace.

(2:30 - 4:00 EST) Suicide Prevention for LGBT+ Veterans with Morgan Bresko MPH, LCSW This presentation will review LGBT+ Veteran history, impacts of Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy, and what we can do as VA Employees and community members to create a more accepting and safe community for all Veterans. This talk is based out of the Portland VA Health Care System in the State of Oregon.

30th - (12:30 -1:30 EST) Active Duty Transgender Service Member and Advocate: Alivia Stehlik Major Alivia Stehlik came out as transgender to her unit and in 2017 volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan. Today she will share insight of her experience of deployment, how the ban on transgender service members impacted her, and the current climate since the ban has been ended. Alivia shares powerful examples of the value diverse service members bring to the success of the military and how equity needs to be considered for supporting each individual. Alivia will examine these challenges through the lens of privilege and oppression as well as what she has learned about herself through these experiences.

(2:00 - 4:00 EST) Gender Awareness and Pronoun Usage with Jack and Tisha The Gender Awareness and Pronoun Usage course for VA healthcare providers provides an in-depth look at American gender concepts, including the origins and lasting impact of a binary gender system. Staff will be provided tools to understand how gender identity functions within the VA culture and policies.

Training

Federally Employed Women's Second Virtual Leadership Summit

Federally Employed Women (FEW) will hold its second Virtual Leadership Summit on August 9-13, 2021. The theme for this summit is "Soaring to New Heights." FEW is a private membership organization working as an advocacy group to improve the status of women employed by the Federal Government, with a focus on four major program areas: compliance, diversity, legislative and training. The summit will offer workshops on equal employment opportunity, human resources, information technology, management and leadership, and courses that address the Executive Core Qualifications required for the Senior Executive Service. VA employees who plan to attend are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for registration must come from the employee's benefitting program office. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees who plan to participate must also register on the [FEW website](#). For additional questions, contact Ms. Sehar Minhas, VA's National Federal Women's Program Manager, ORMDI.

Overview of the Harassment Prevention Program

ORMDI hosts "Overview of the Harassment Prevention Program (HPP)" the first Wednesday of each month from 10 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 3 p.m. (ET). Register on the Talent Management System (TMS VA 4563938).

Conflict Management

The Conflict Management virtual course provides a basic understanding of conflict, the underlying causes of conflict, and how alternative dispute resolution (ADR) can be used to resolve disputes with an emphasis on mediation. Conflict Management training (TMS VA 4562696) will be held June 16 and 23 from 11 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2 p.m.

ADR Awareness

ADR Awareness provides information on EEO laws, regulations, and theories of discrimination that govern the EEO complaint process. It provides a basic understanding of conflict, the underlying causes of conflict, and how ADR can be used to resolve disputes. ADR Awareness training (TMS VA 4517625) will be held July 14 and 21 from 11 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2 p.m.

Workplace Civility

Workplace Civility training will be held August 11 and 18. Training for Managers (TMS VA 4559059) is 11 a.m. to noon and training for Employees (TMS VA 4504880) is 1 to 2 p.m.

The Audacity to Fail

Podcast Focuses on Discovering Leadership Wisdom Through Experiences with Failures and Missteps

The Audacity to Fail Podcast: misStepping Into Success focuses on discovering leadership wisdom through experiences with failures and missteps. The podcasts dive into conversations and stories from leaders as they share that failure activates a growth mindset, is an important part of learning and motivation for improvement! For the May episode, Dr. Shari Dade sits down for a wellness conversation with Dr. Kavitha Reddy. Dr. Reddy is the Associate Director of Employee Whole Health within Veterans Health Administration's Office of Patient-Centered Care and Cultural Transformation. She carries a previous leadership role as Whole Health Clinical Director at St. Louis VA, one of the 18 flagship sites for whole health system deployment. Dr. Reddy shares the missteps leaders can make when navigating the challenge of integrating whole health into our work lives. The Audacity to Fail Podcast Series is also available on the [Talent Management System](#).

Policy Alert

VA Directive 5975

[VA Directive 5975, Diversity and Inclusion](#), was published on April 29, 2021 rescinding VA Directive 5975 dated March 29, 2013. This Directive updates policies, program requirements and responsibilities for VA's Diversity and Inclusion programs.



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